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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

Ghatotkacha

Vol. 592 Rs. 25

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GHATOTKACHA

Ghatotkacha was one of the finest characters in the Mahabharata — affectionate and kind even though he was a Rakshasa. Perhaps that was because he was only half a Rakshasa, being the son of Bheema and the Rakshasi Hidimbaa. From his mother he learnt all the arts of the Rakshasas. From his father he inherited an affectionate and chivalrous temperament. He was an invaluable ally to the Pandavas in times of trouble — he appeared before them whenever they thought of him.

The theme of Vatsala's wedding, a very popular one in South India, is much exploited in ballads and stories. It was Ghatotkacha, who with his Rakshasa hordes and their magical powers, made the wedding of Abhimanyu and Vatsala possible. This story is not found in the Mahabharata or in Sanskrit literature. It seems to have evolved at a much later date, as a legend, in Telugu and Kannada. The exponents of the art of Harikatha count this story as the most popular one in their repertoire and it has been handed down by word of mouth for generations.

Our Amar Chitra Katha is derived partly from the Mahabharata and partly from the legend.

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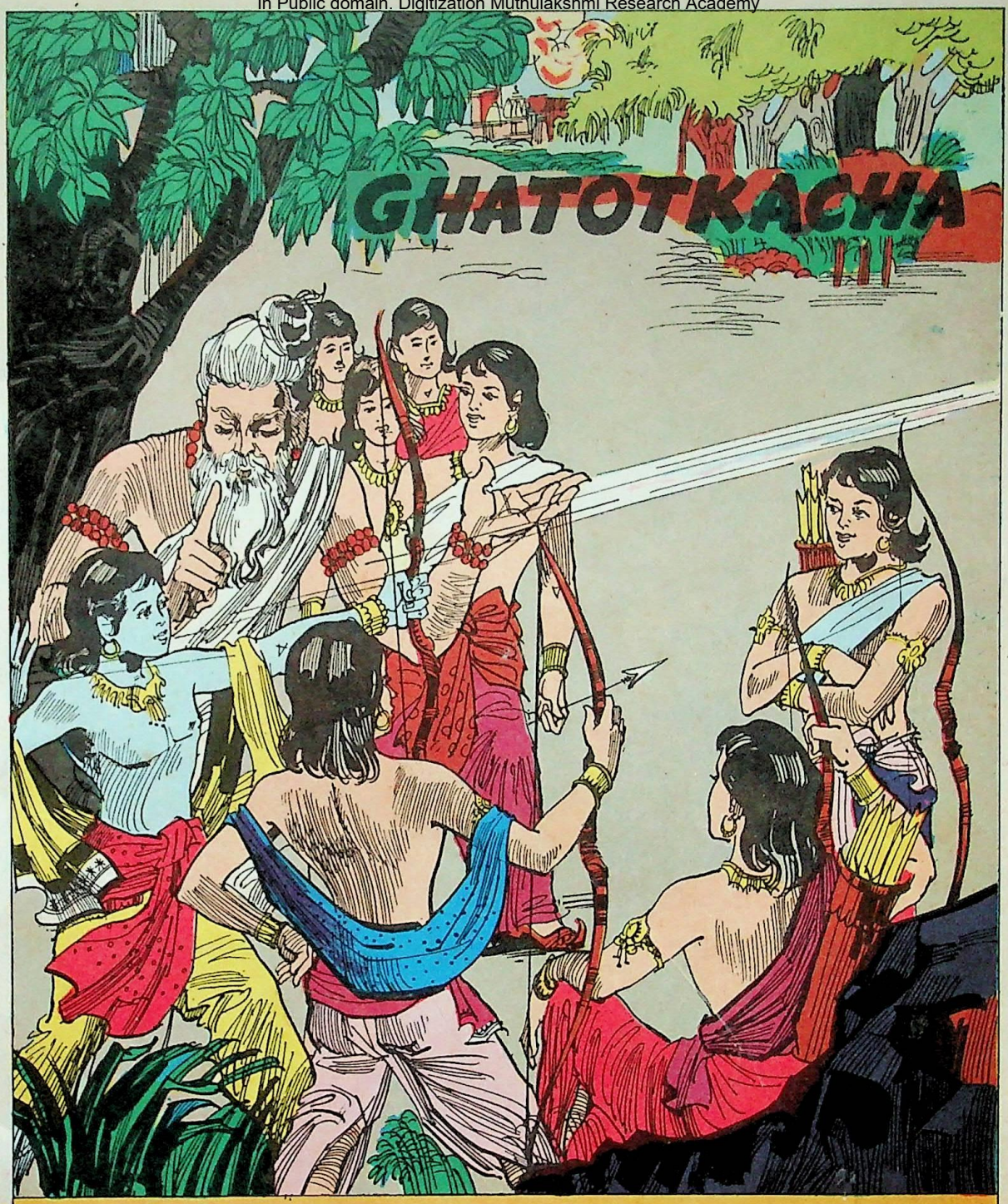
GHATOTKACHA



THE KAURAVA PRINCES AND THE ORPHANED PANDAVA PRINCES WERE COUSINS. THEY GREW UP TOGETHER AT HASTINAPURA IN THE CHARGE OF THEIR GRAND-UNCLE, BHEESHMA.

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BUT THE KAURAVAS WERE JEALOUS OF THEIR COUSINS.

UNCLE BHEESHMA IS PARTIAL TO THE PANDAVAS.

THE PEOPLE TOO LOVE THEM MORE THAN US.

JEALOUSY SOON TURNED INTO HATRED. DURYODHANA, THE ELDEST KAURAVA THOUGHT OF A WICKED PLAN.

WE WILL SEND THEM TO VARANAVATA TO LIVE IN THE HOUSE OF LAC. AND THEN SET FIRE TO IT.

WHEN THE PANDAVAS ARRIVED AT VARANAVATA, YUDHISHTHIRA, THE ELDEST OF THEM TURNED TO THE OTHERS—

THIS IS A TRAP!

THE PANDAVAS SECRETLY HAD A TUNNEL MADE FOR ESCAPE.

BEFORE WE LEAVE, WE MUST SET FIRE TO THIS HOUSE.

AFTER SETTING THE HOUSE ON FIRE, THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR MOTHER, KUNTI, ESCAPED THROUGH THE TUNNEL.

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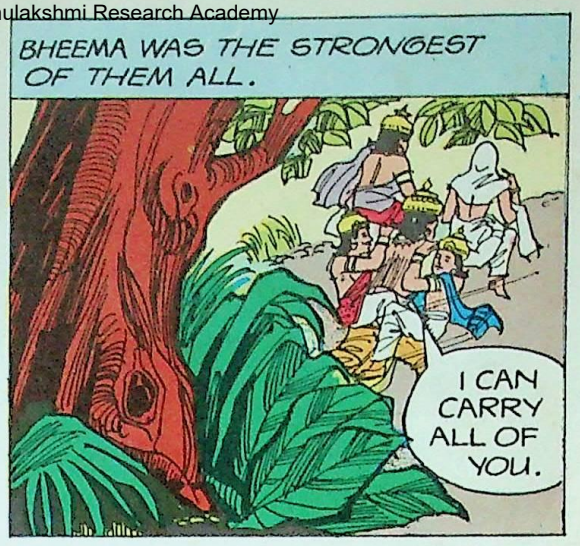

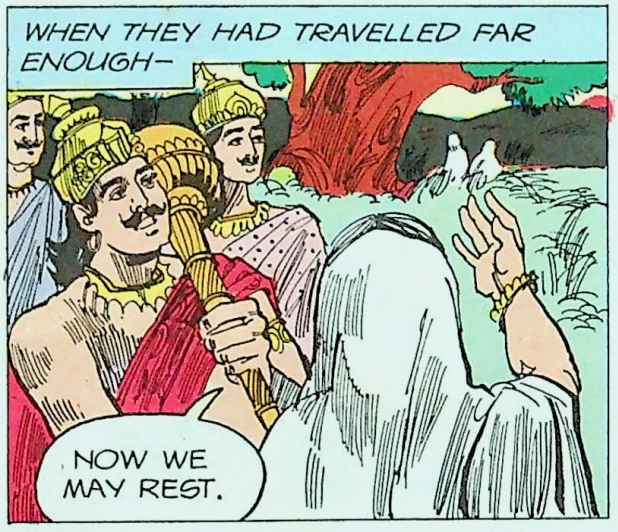

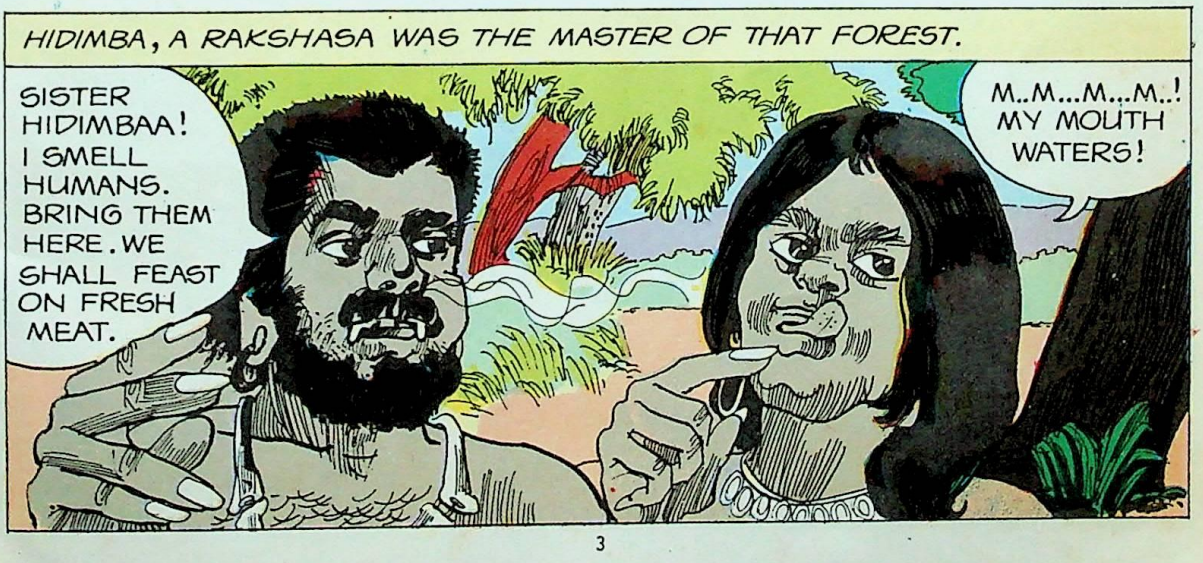

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WHEN HIDIMBAA CAME IN SEARCH OF THE PANDAVAS SHE SAW BHEEMA FIRST.

HOW HANDSOME HE IS! I DON'T WANT TO EAT HIM. I'LL MARRY HIM.

I SHALL CHANGE MYSELF INTO A BEAUTIFUL GIRL. THEN HE WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH ME.

MEANWHILE -

HIDIMBAA IS LATE. HAS SHE...? IS SHE...? NO IT CANNOT BE! YET I WONDER...

AS I SUSPECTED! SHE HAS CHANGED HER FORM AND IS MAKING EYES AT THAT HUMAN.

HIDIMBA CHALLENGED BHEEMA AND THEY FOUGHT.

THE NOISE AWOKE KUNTI.

YUDHISHTHIRA! GET UP!

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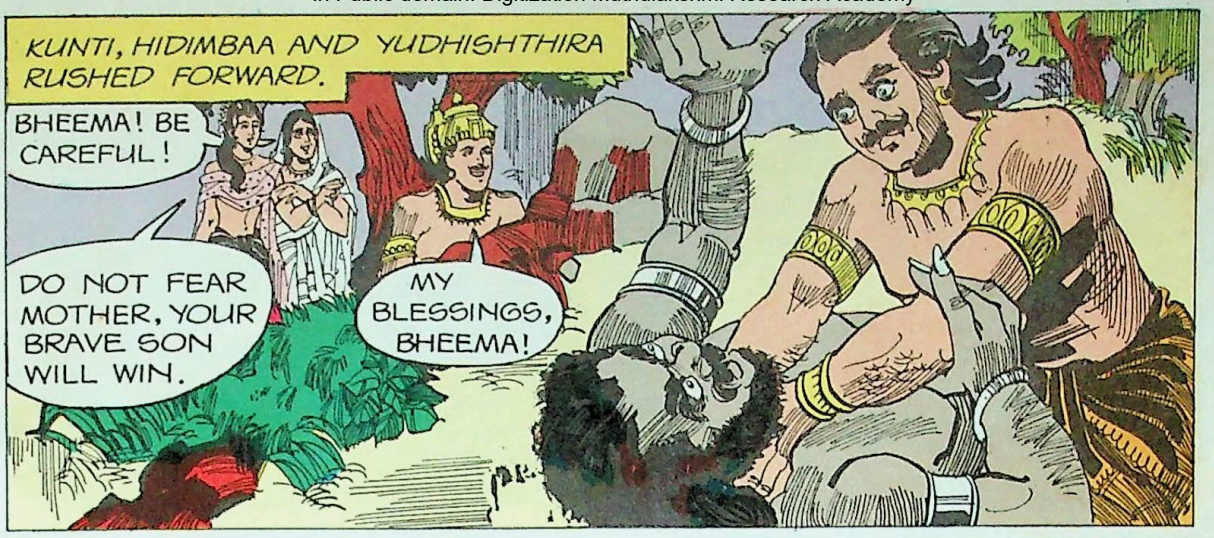

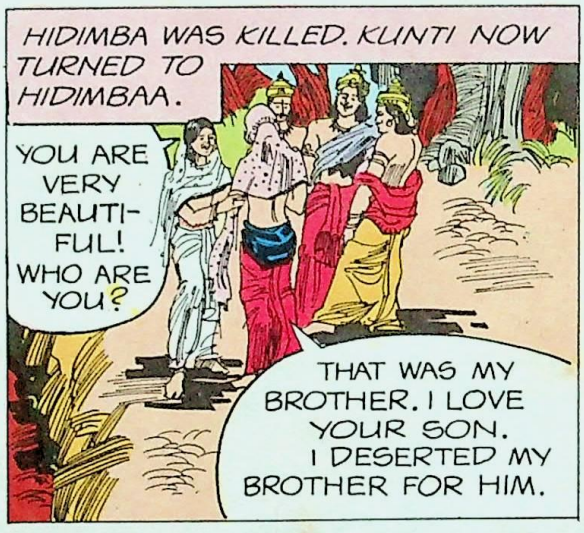

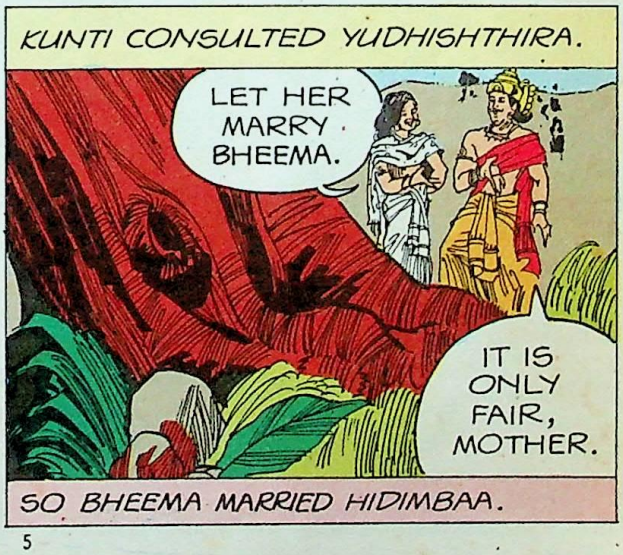

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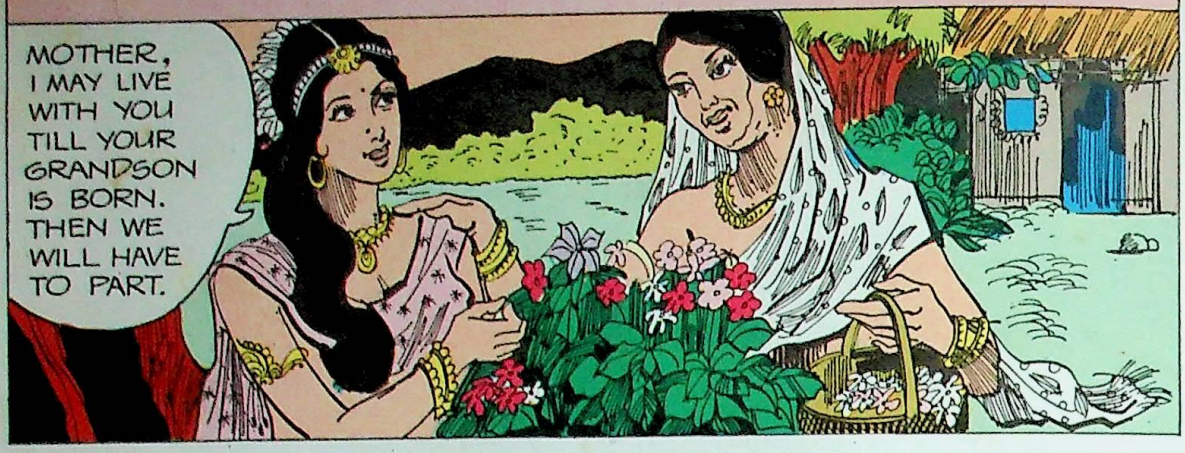
HIDIMBAA WAS A DEVOTED DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.



NOT LONG AFTER, BHEEMA'S SON, GHATOTKACHA, WAS BORN. BEING A RAKSHASA HE KNEW ALL THEIR MAGIC AND WAS FULL-GROWN AT BIRTH.

THE PANDAVAS WENT THEIR WAY AND GHATOTKACHA LIVED WITH HIS MOTHER IN THEIR FOREST.

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MANY YEARS PASSED BY. THE PANDAVAS BECAME THE RULERS OF INDRAPRASTHA WHERE THEY BUILT A BEAUTIFUL PALACE. YUDHISHTHIRA PERFORMED THE RAJASUYA SACRIFICE. THE KAURAVAS WERE JEALOUS OF THEIR SUCCESS.

SO THE KAURAVAS INVITED THE PANDAVAS TO HASTINAPURA.

YUDHISHTHIRA PLAYED AND LOST ALL HIS WEALTH.

HE LOST HIS KINGDOM TOO. BUT HE CONTINUED TO PLAY.

YUDHISHTHIRA LOST. THE PANDAVAS HAD TO LEAVE FOR THE FOREST, WITH DRAUPADI, THEIR QUEEN.

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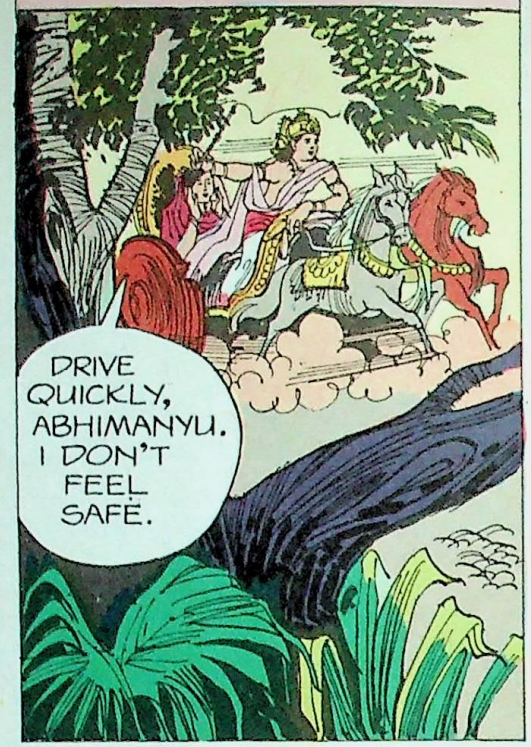
WHEN THEY HAD GONE, ARJUNA'S WIFE, SUBHADRA, A YADAVA PRINCESS, TOOK THEIR SON, ABHIMANYU, TO THE YADAVA KINGDOM.

ON THE WAY TO DWARAKA—



SUDDENLY—

BUT ABHIMANYU WAS UNDAUNTED.

* DURYODHANA'S SON.

• BALARAMA'S DAUGHTER

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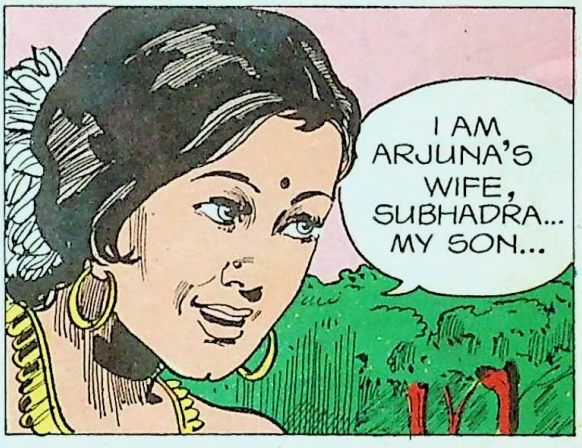

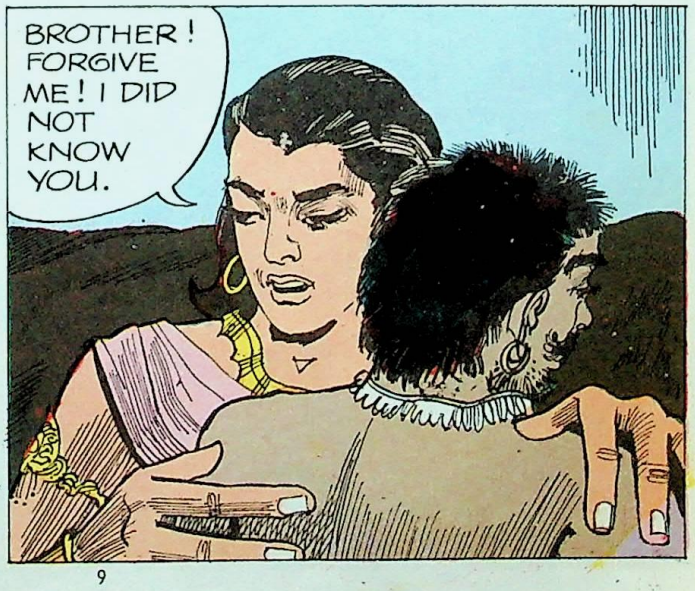

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SUBHADRA TOLD HER STORY.

SISTER! MY BROTHER, BALARAMA, HAS GONE BACK ON HIS WORD.

ABHIMANYU WAS BETROTHED TO HIS DAUGHTER, VATSALA.

BUT NOW THAT ARJUNA IS IN EXILE, VATSALA IS TO MARRY LAKSHMANA, THE SON OF THE KAURAVA, DURYODHANA.

WE ARE GOING TO DWARAKA TO TRY AND PREVENT IT.

GHATOTKACHA PROMISED TO HELP THEM.

DON'T WORRY, MOTHER! TAKE OUR GUESTS HOME. I WILL SETTLE THIS MATTER.

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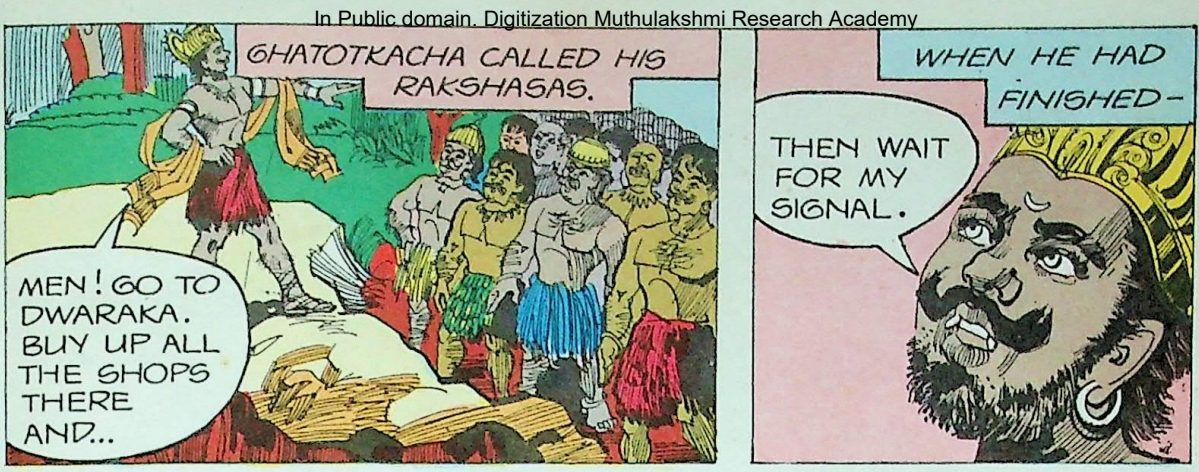

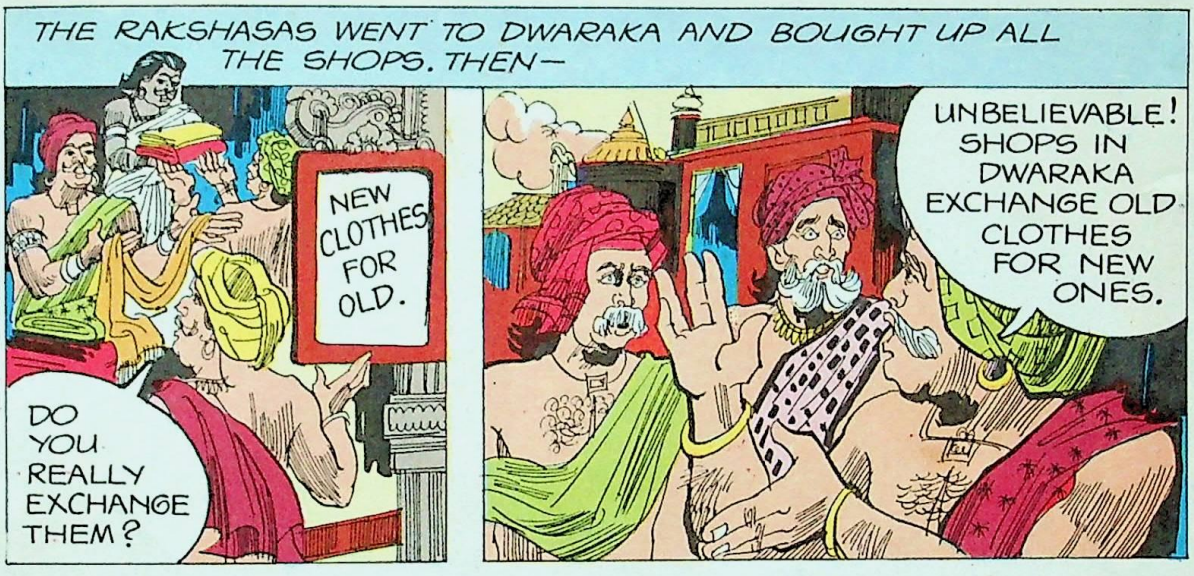

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MEANWHILE GHATOTKACHA ENTERED VATSALA'S ROOM.

I COME FROM ABHIMANYU! READ THIS.

VATSALA READ ABHIMANYU'S MESSAGE.

COME! SIT DOWN AND DO NOT BE AFRAID.

MY LORD. TELLS ME TO OBEY YOU.

GHATOTKACHA PICKED UP VATSALA'S BED AND FLEW OUT OF THE WINDOW.

YOU SHALL SOON BE WITH ABHIMANYU AND MOTHER SUBHADRA.

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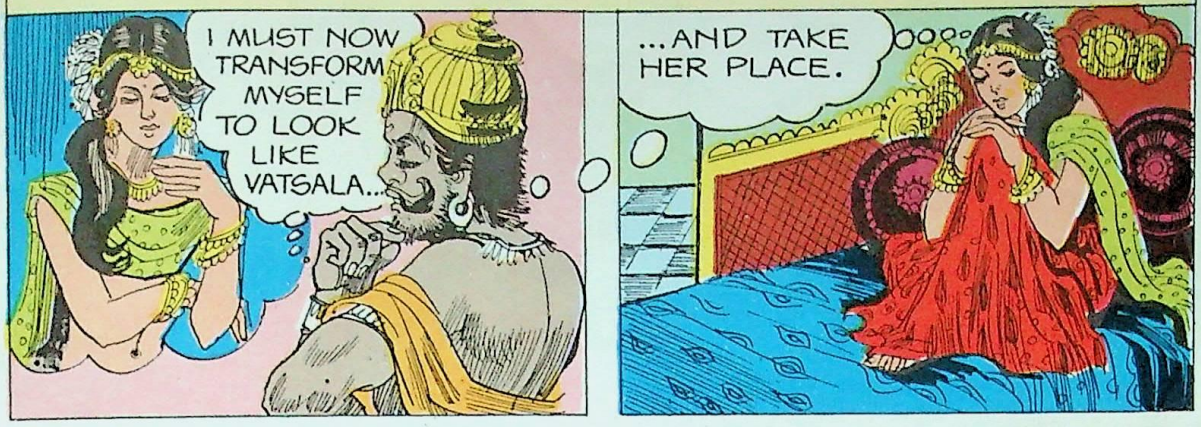
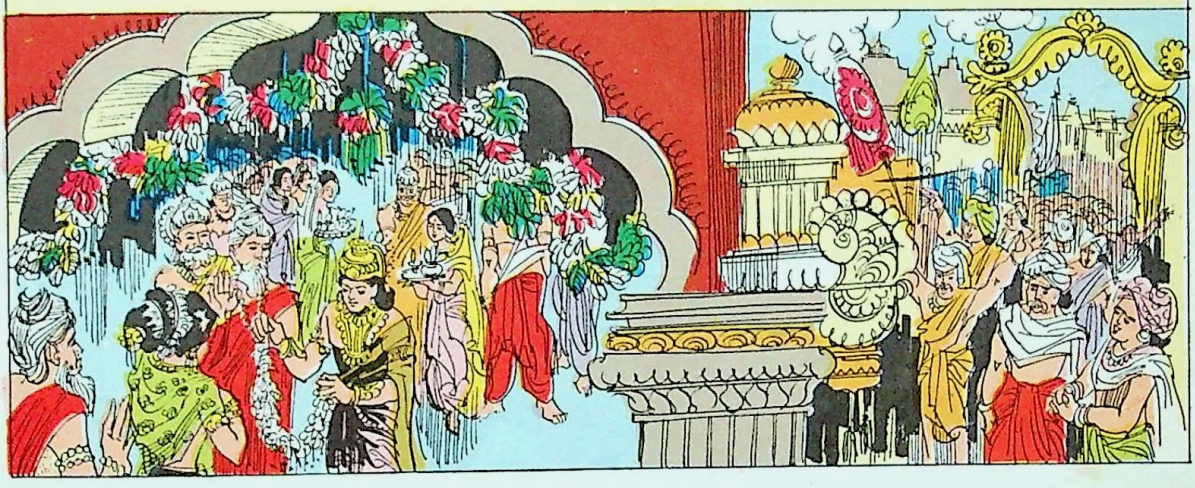
GHATOTKACHA LEFT VATSALA WITH ABHIMANYU AND RETURNED TO DWARAKA.



THE NEXT MORNING THE BRIDE WAS LED TO THE MARRIAGE HALL.



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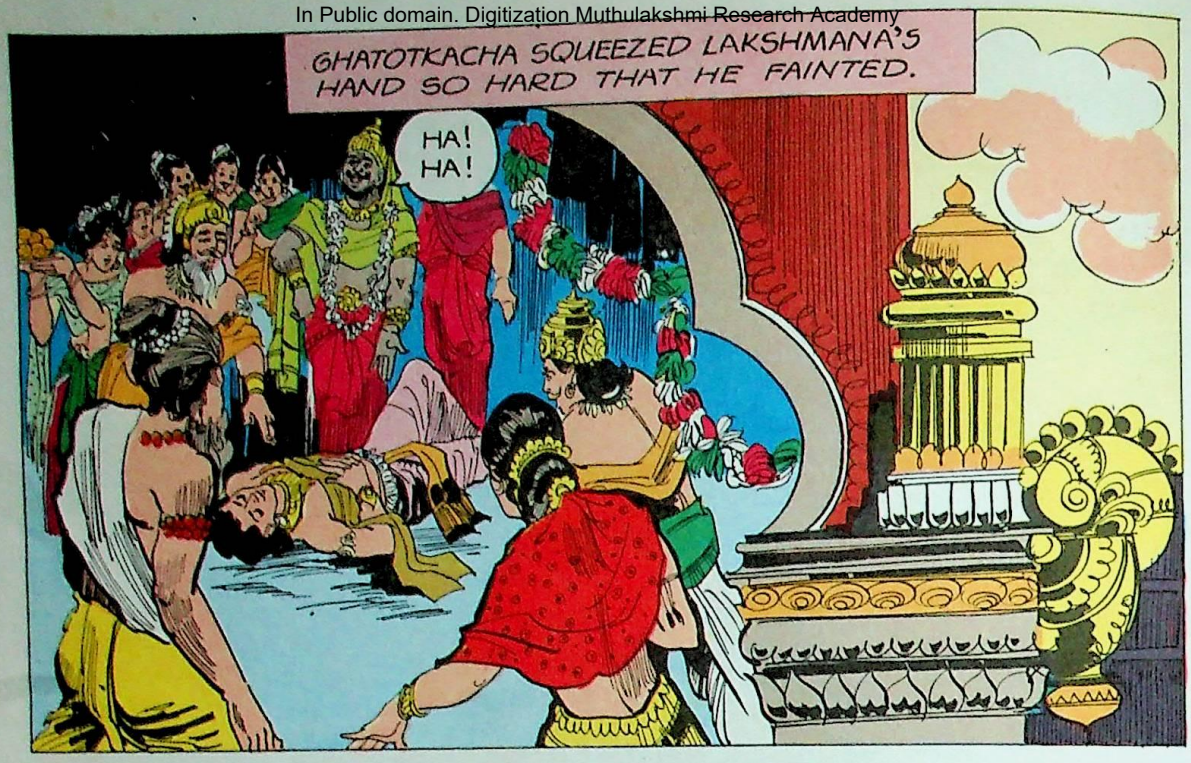

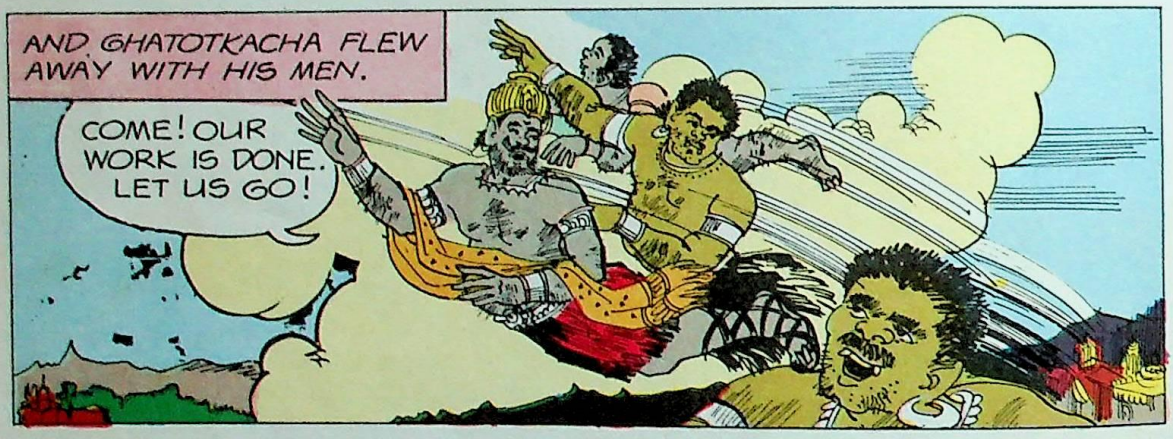

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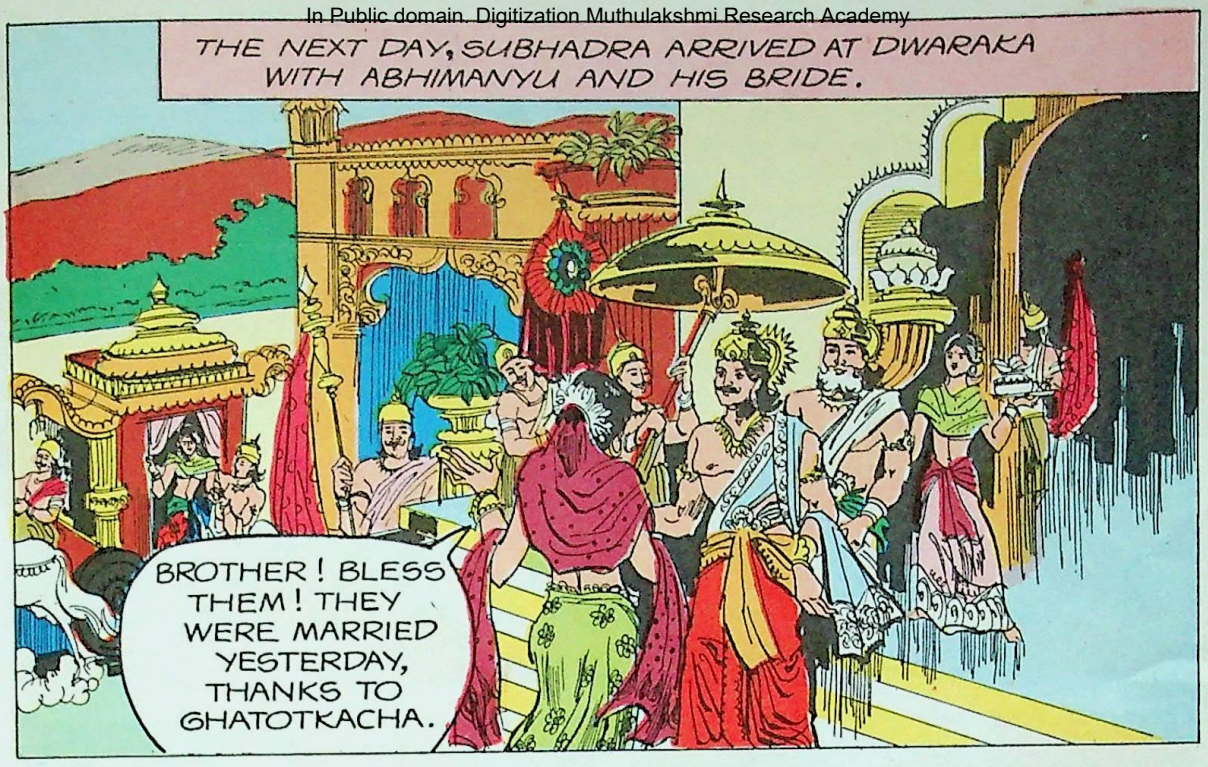

ABHIMANYU LIVED HAPPILY AT DWARAKA WITH VATSALA AND SUBHADRA.

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WHEN THEIR EXILE WAS OVER, THE PANDAVAS RETURNED FROM THE FOREST. THE KAURAVAS WOULD NOT GIVE BACK THEIR KINGDOM. SO THE PANDAVAS COLLECTED THEIR ARMIES TO FIGHT THEM. LORD KRISHNA WAS ON THE SIDE OF THE PANDAVAS—

BHEEMA! YOU MUST CALL GHATOTKACHA. WE WILL NEED HIS HELP. DON'T YOU AGREE, KRISHNA?

YES. HE HELPED MY SISTER SUBHADRA WHEN SHE NEEDED HIM.

NOW HE WILL BE ONLY TOO GLAD TO HELP US.

I HAVE BUT TO THINK OF HIM.

GHATOTKACHA APPEARED WITH HIS RAKSHASA FORCES.

FATHER! HERE I AM!

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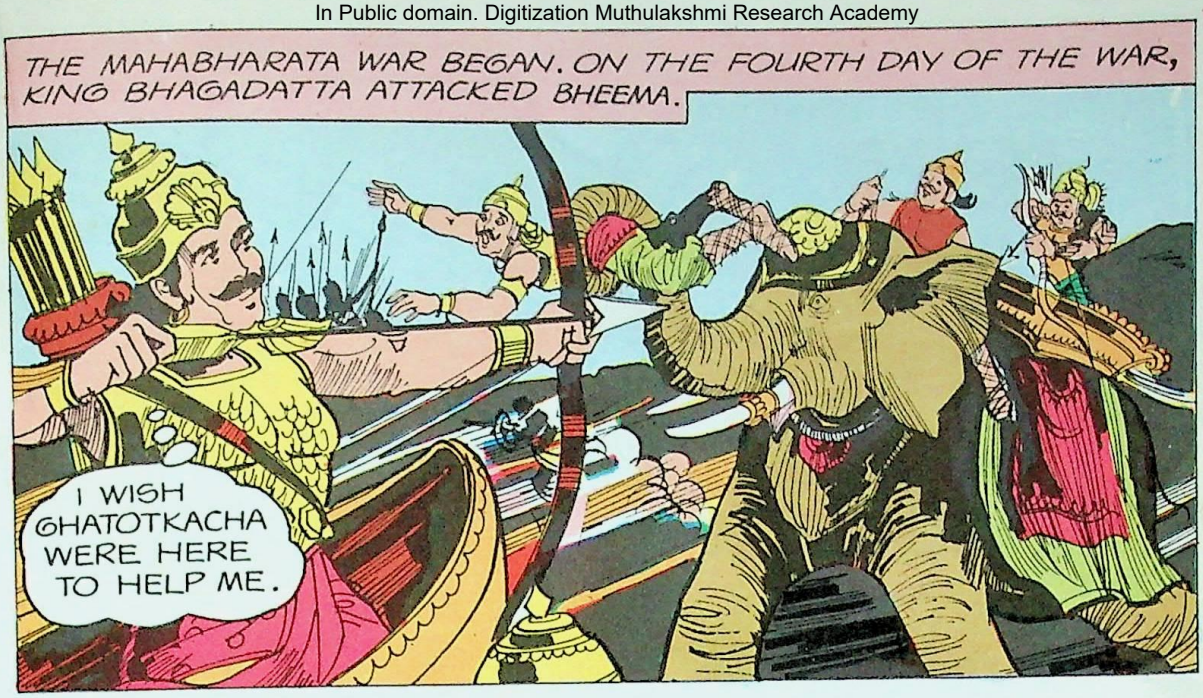

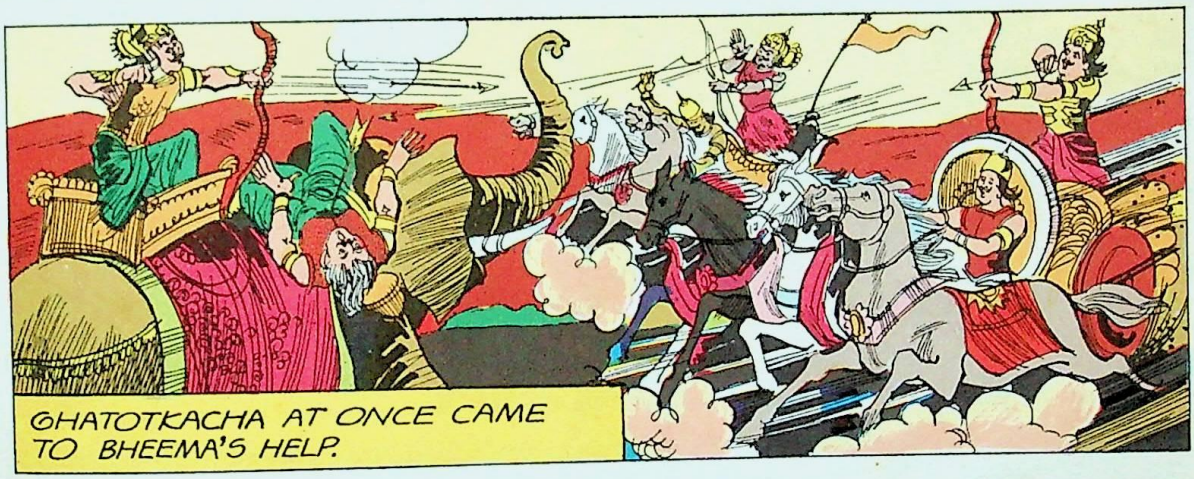

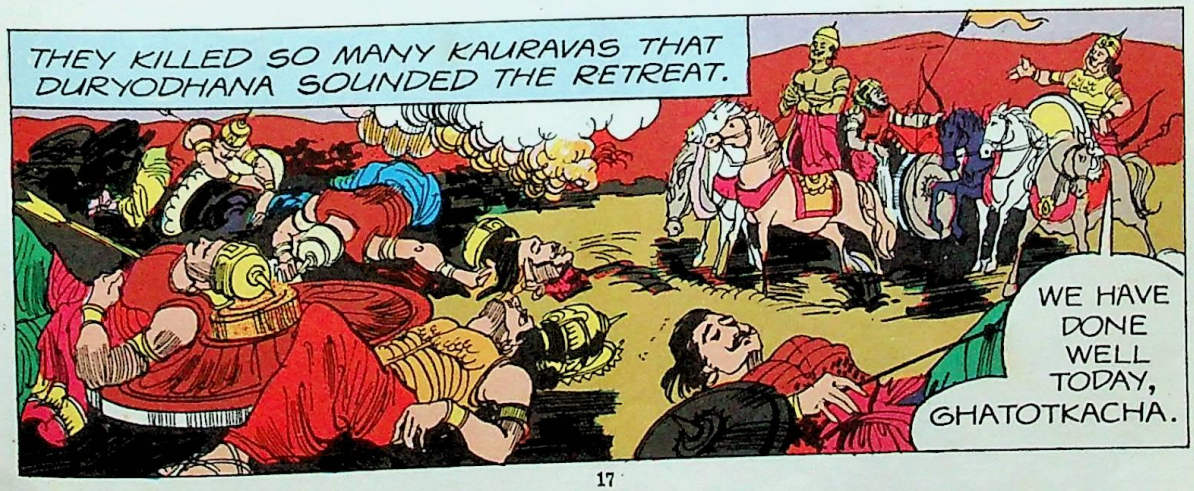

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ON THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF THE WAR, ABHIMANYU WAS KILLED.

JAYADRATHA WAS THE CAUSE OF ABHIMANYU'S DEATH. ARJUNA SWORE TO KILL HIM BY SUNSET NEXT DAY.

IF I DON'T SUCCEED, I WILL KILL MYSELF!

DURYODHANA CALLED HIS GENERALS TO HIM.

WE MUST GUARD JAYADRATHA FROM ARJUNA.

IF HE IS ALIVE AT SUNSET, ARJUNA WILL KILL HIMSELF AND THE WAR WILL END.

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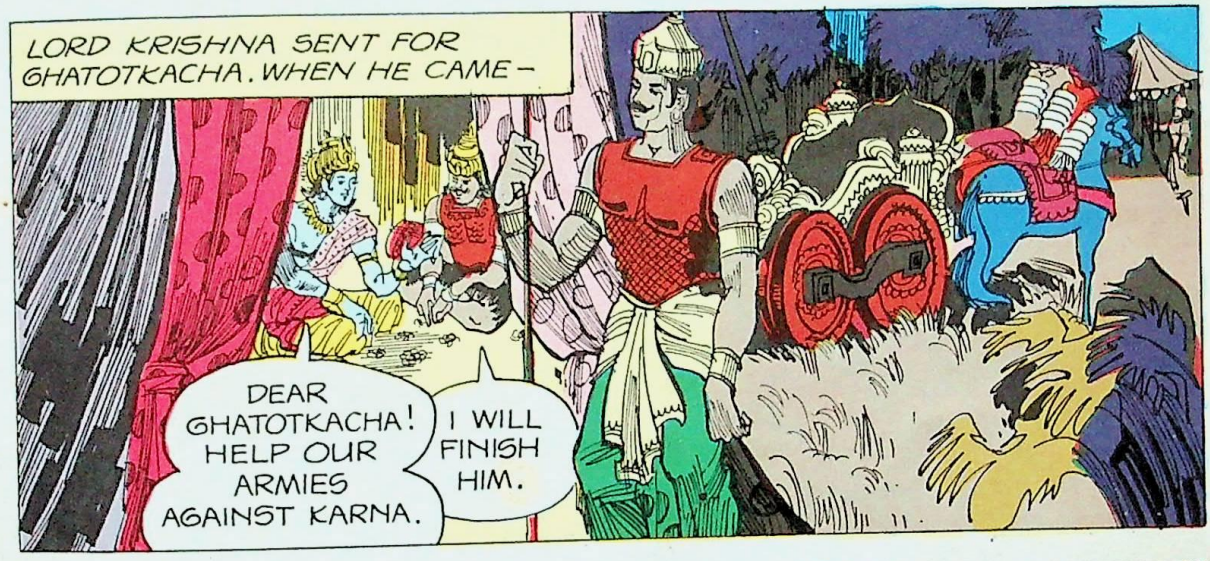
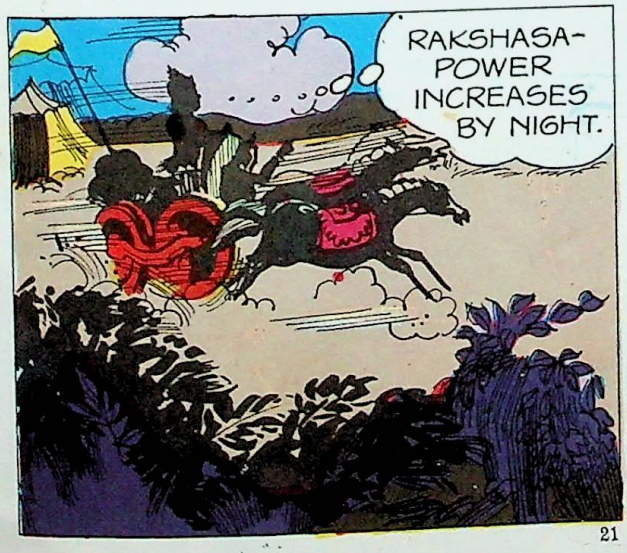
DRONA AND KARNA FOUGHT SO WELL THAT THE PANDAVAS WERE HARD-PRESSED. YUDHISHTHIRA CALLED ARJUNA AND KRISHNA.

LORD KRISHNA SENT FOR GHATOTKACHA. WHEN HE CAME—





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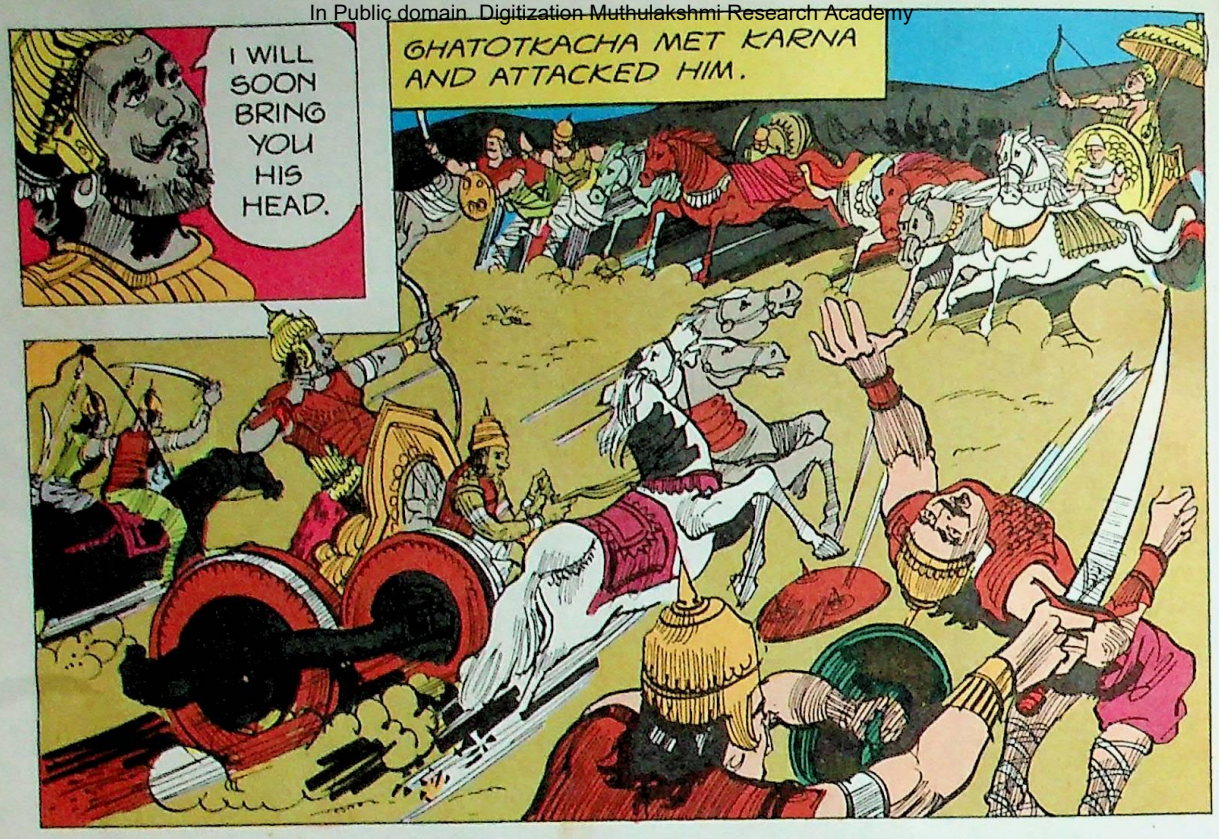

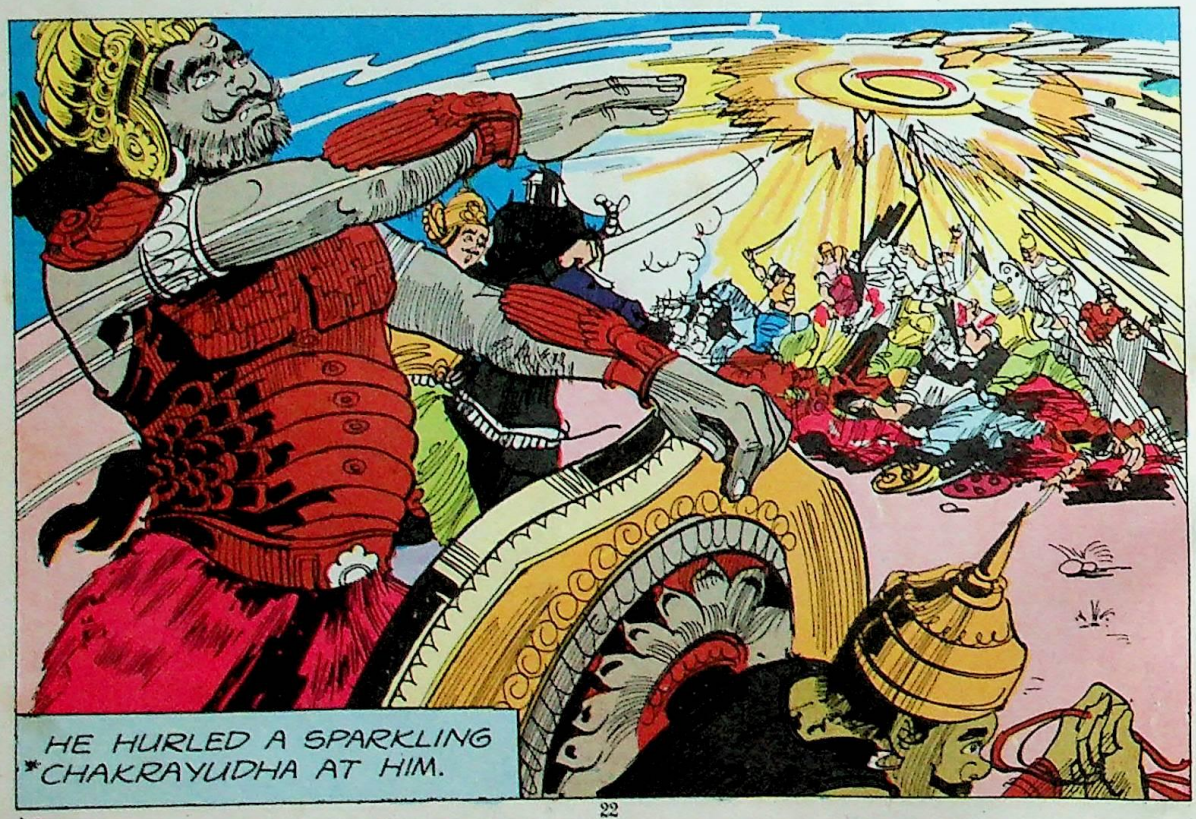

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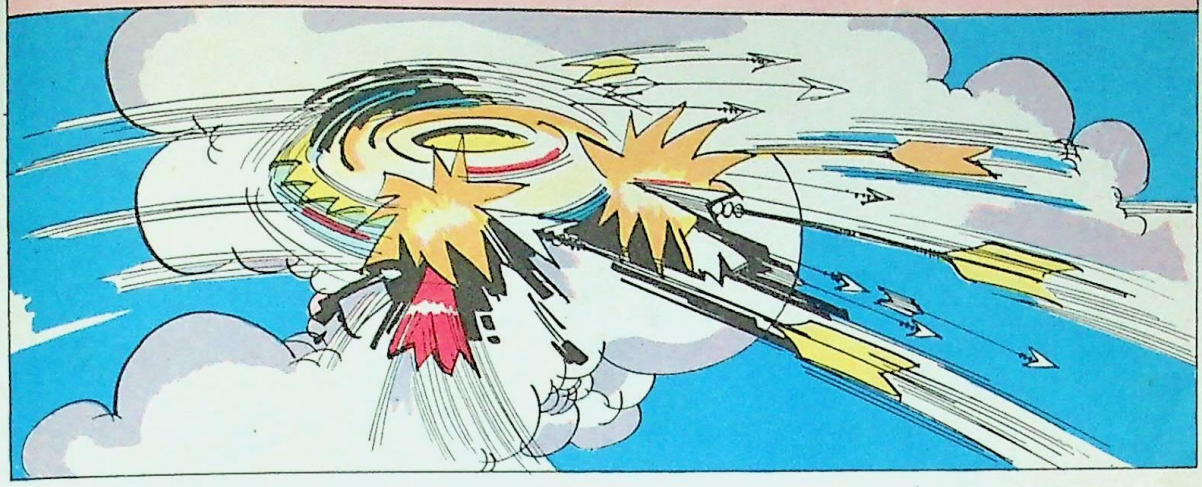
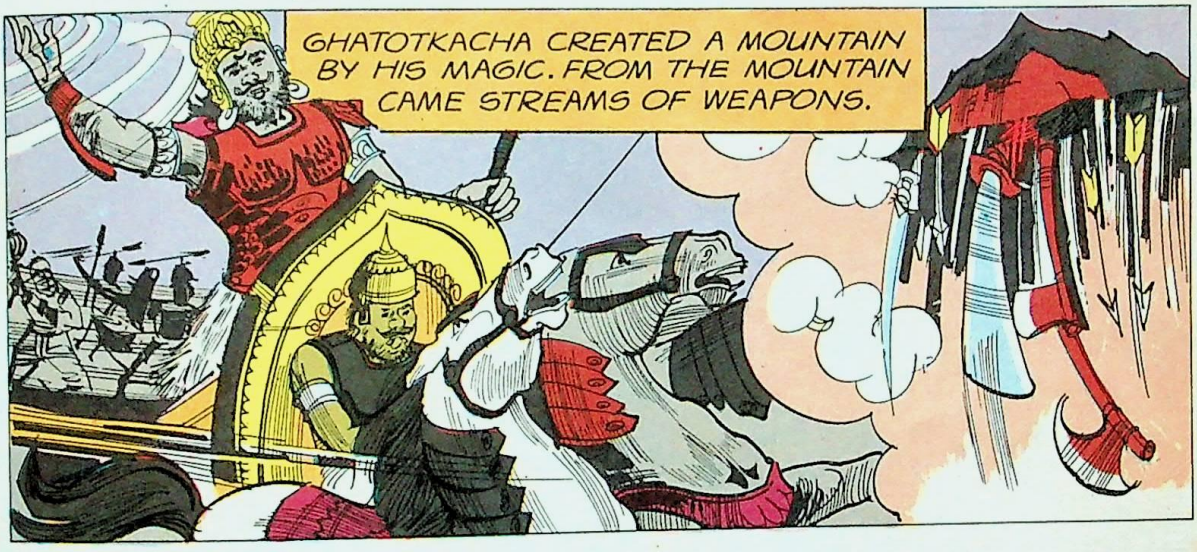
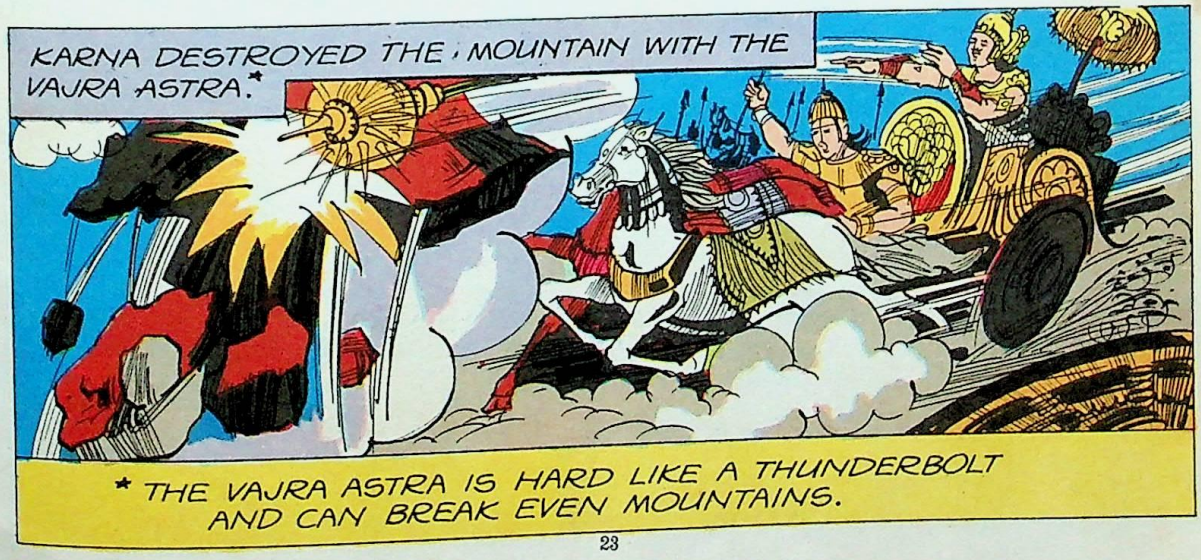
KARNA DESTROYED IT WITH ARROWS, SMILING ALL THE TIME.







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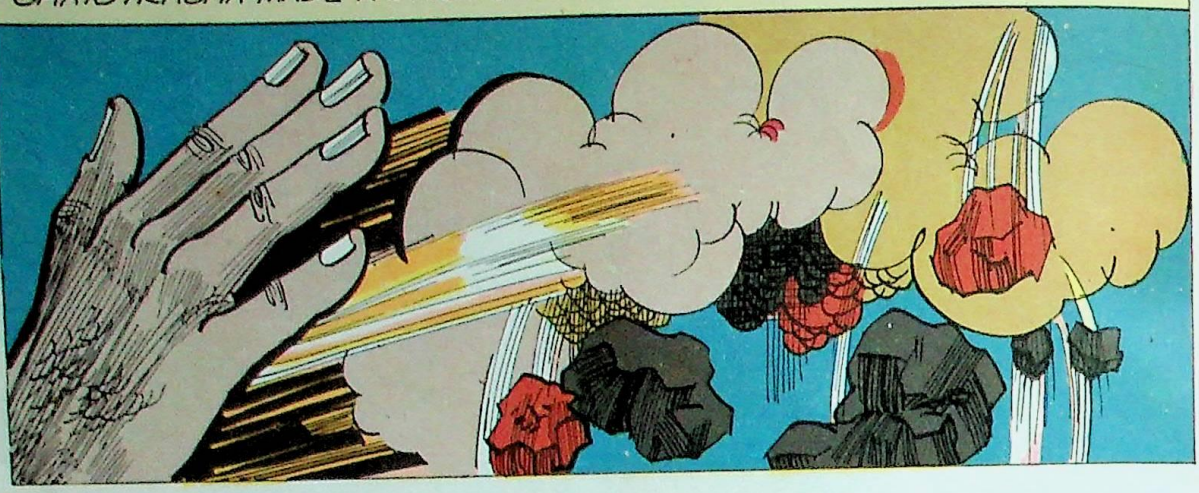
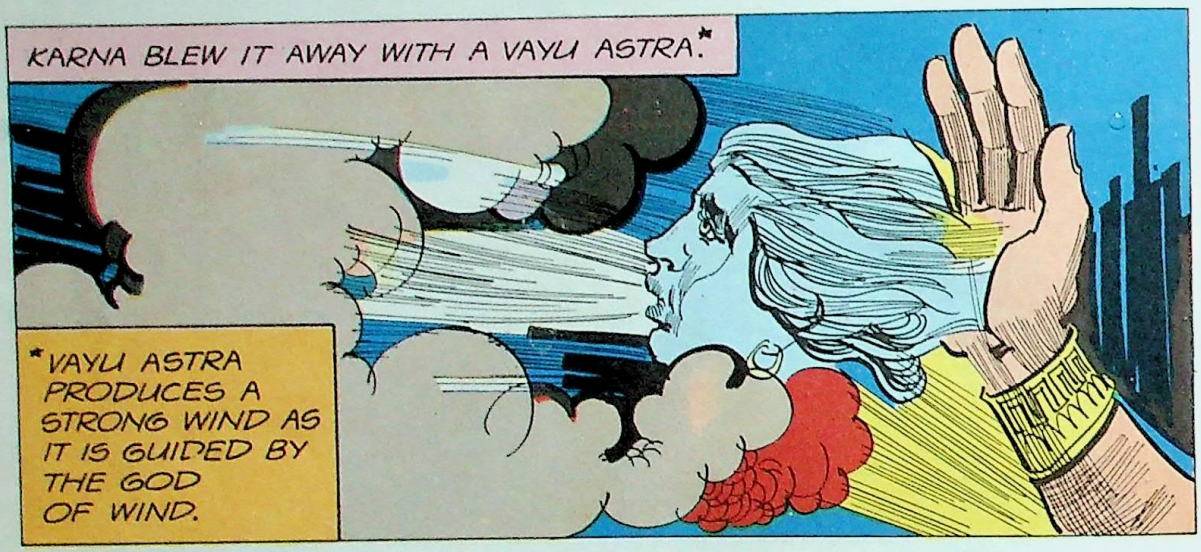
GHATOTKACHA MADE A DARK CLOUD WHICH RAINED DOWN STONES.



KARNA BLEW IT AWAY WITH A VAYU ASTRA.*



*VAYU ASTRA PRODUCES A STRONG WIND AS IT IS GUIDED BY THE GOD OF WIND.

GHATOTKACHA SENT TREES FLYING AT HIM.

KARNA DESTROYED THEM WITH ARROWS.

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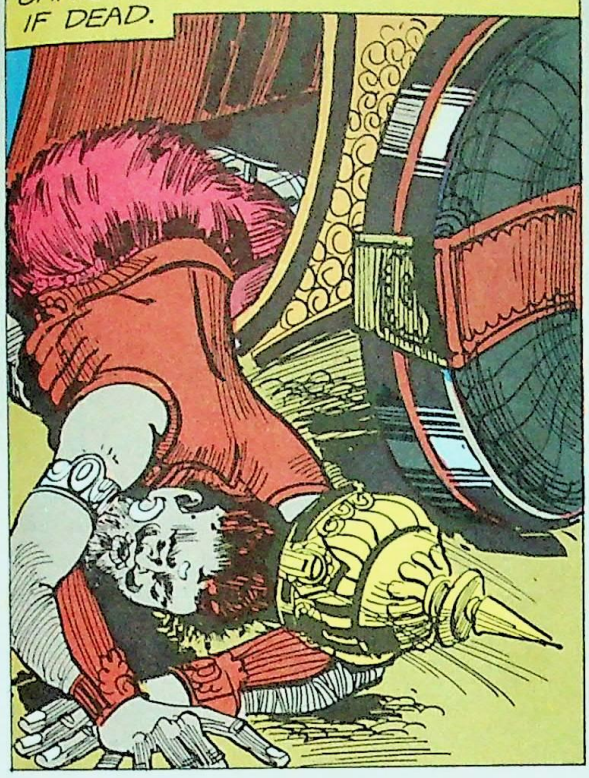
GHATOTKACHA FELL DOWN AS IF DEAD.



THE PANDAVA SOLDIERS GRIEVED.

SUDDENLY THERE WERE GHATOTKACHAS EVERYWHERE.

KARNA SHOT ARROWS AT THEM ALL.

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THEN HE BECAME INVISIBLE AND SENT SHOWERS OF FIERY WEAPONS.

THE TERRIFIED KAURAVA FORCES APPEALED TO KARNA.

SAVE US, KARNA!

YOUR ARROWS ARE NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH.

YOU ARE OUR PROTECTOR.

USE YOUR SHAKTI!

THE SHAKTI HAD BEEN GIVEN TO KARNA BY INDRA, KING OF THE GODS.

IT IS MY WEAPON. IT WILL KILL ANYONE. BUT YOU CAN USE IT ONLY ONCE. IT WILL RETURN TO ME AFTER THAT.

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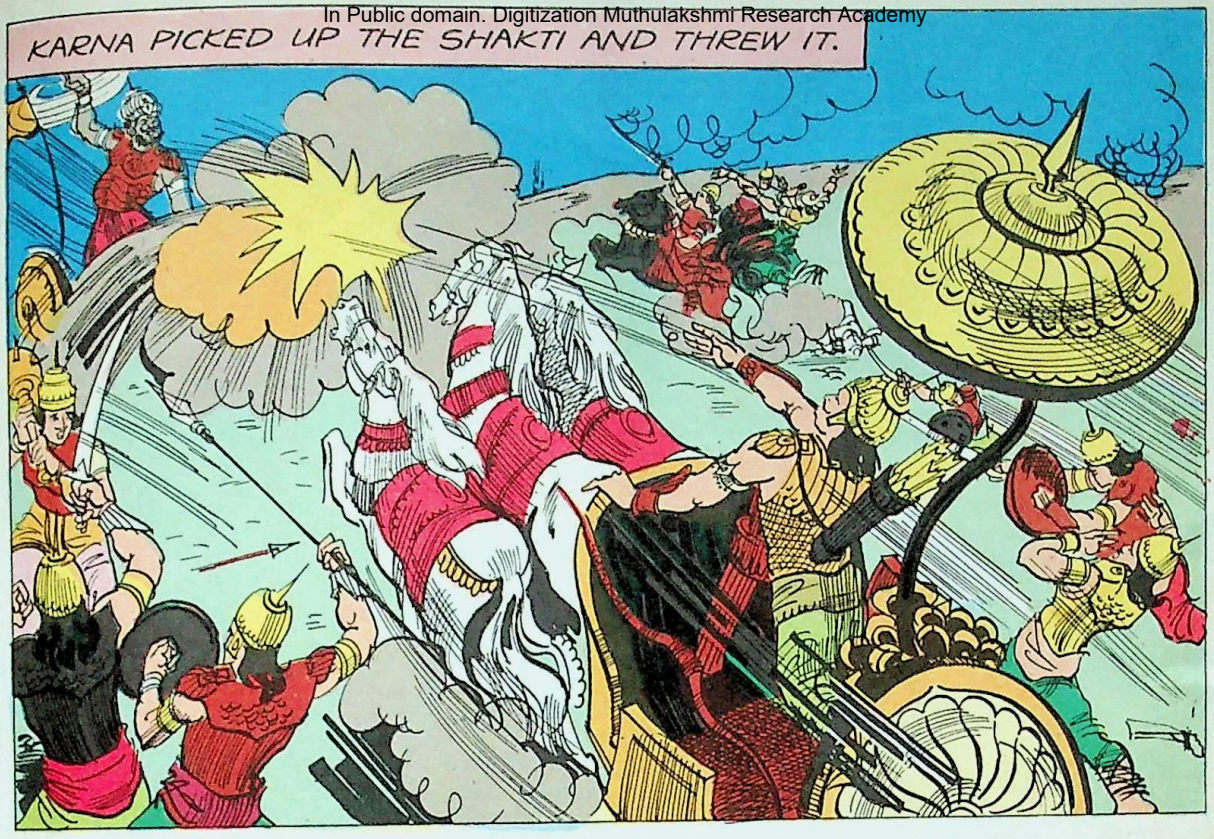

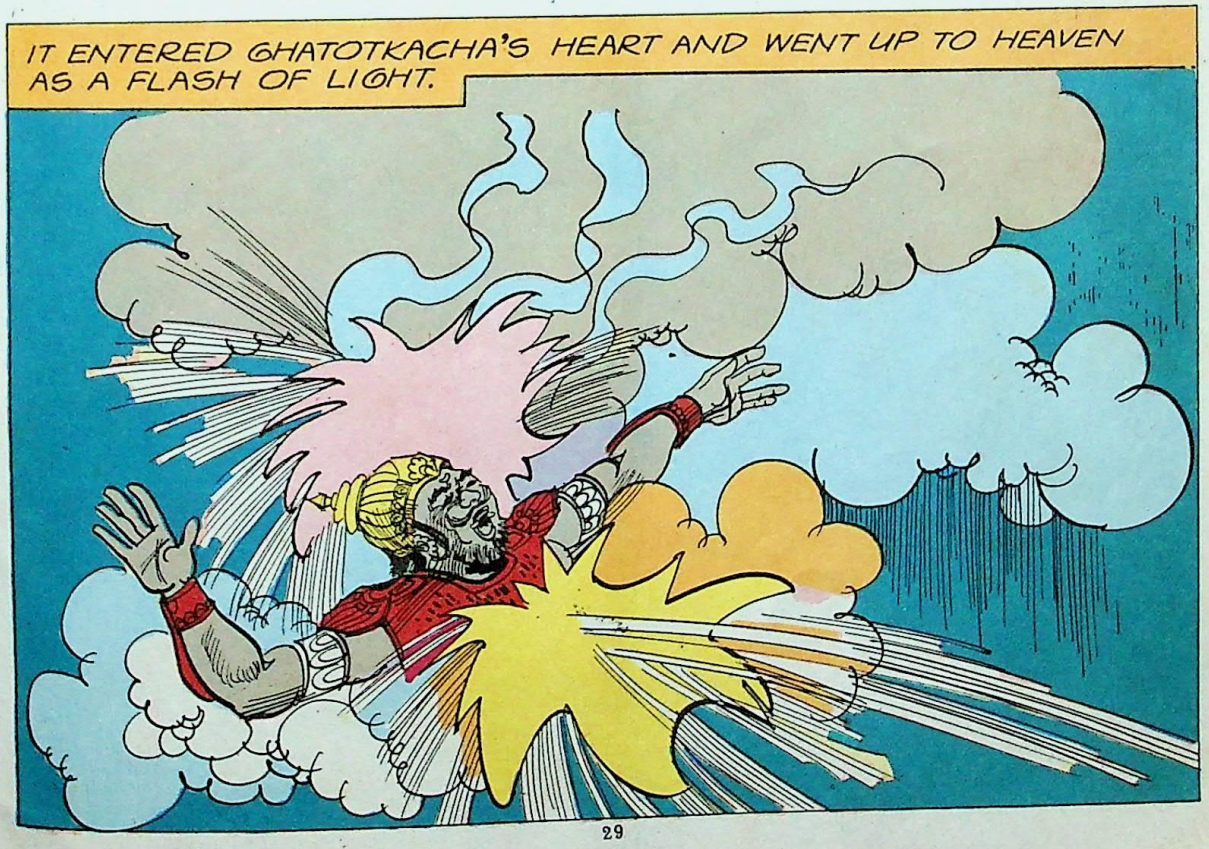

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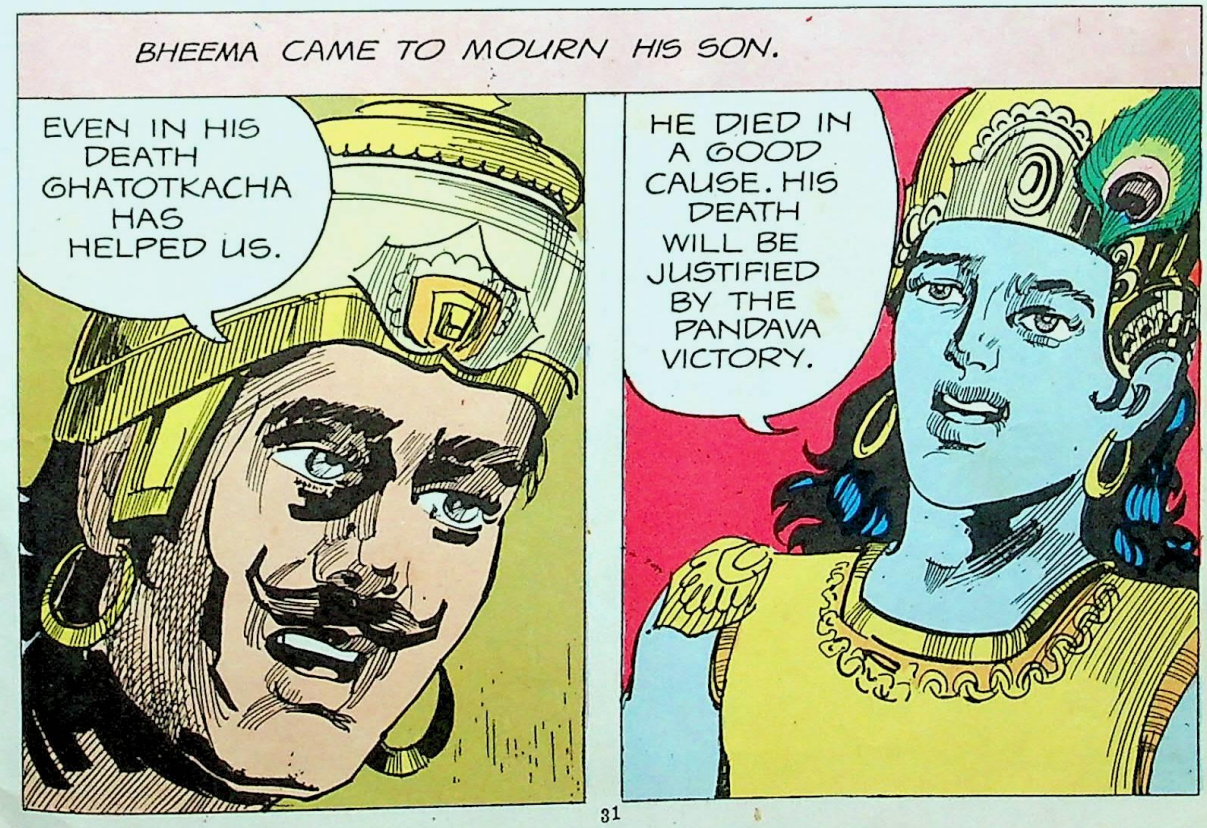

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556 Hitopadesha - Choice of Friends
557 Birbal the Witty
558 Birbal the Clever
559 Birbal the Just
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562 Panchatantra - The Brahmin and the Goat
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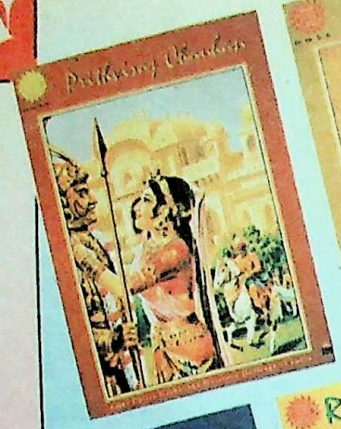

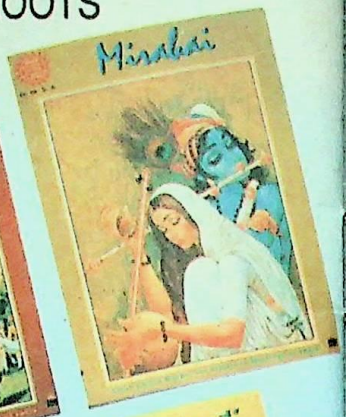

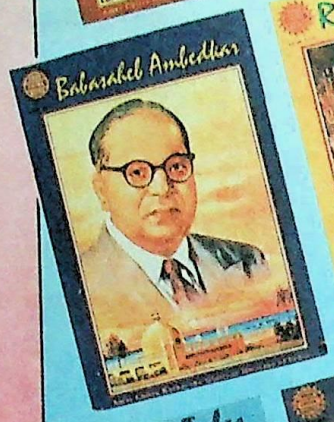

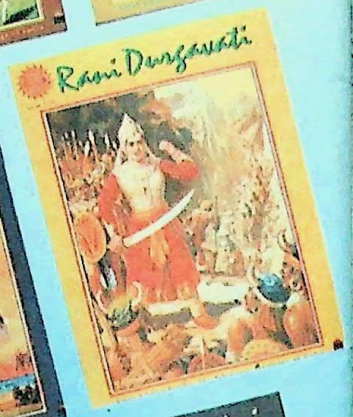

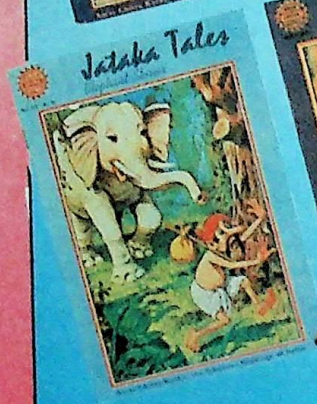

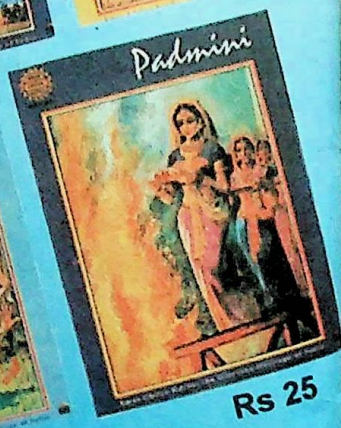

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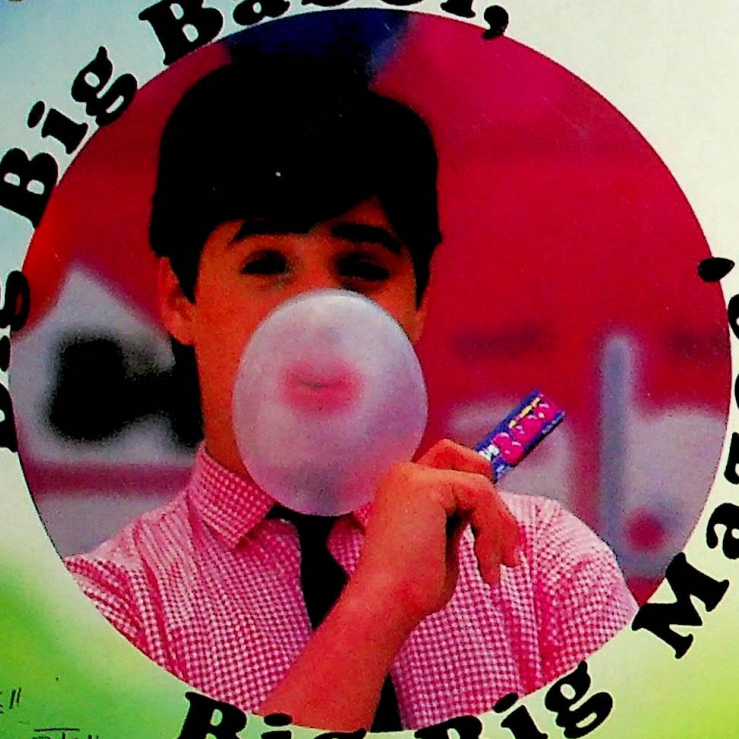

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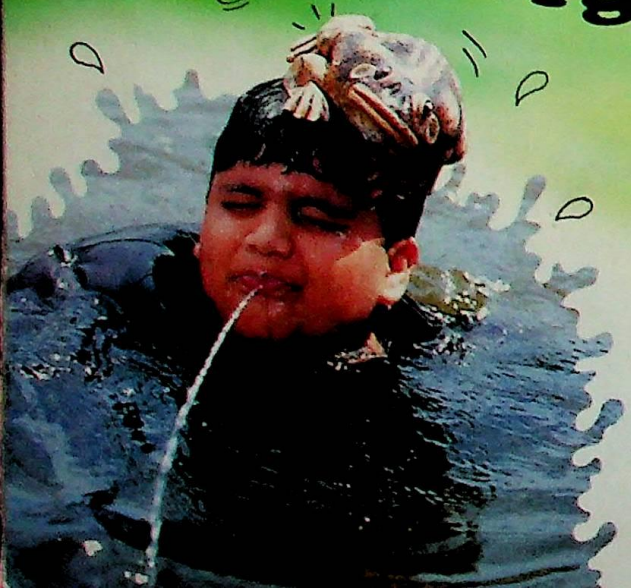

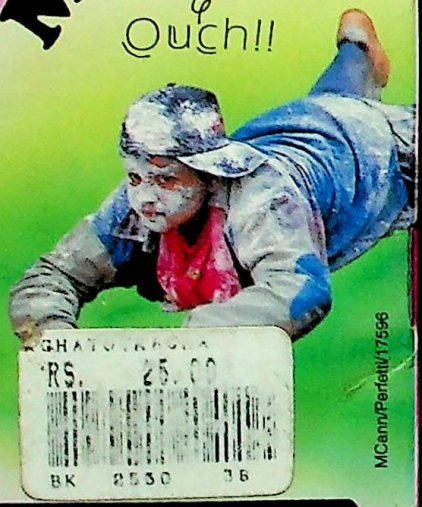

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